



Hansard Society Ltd

Recognition Scheme for Educational
Oversight Review by the Quality Assurance
Agency for Higher Education

April 2016

About this report

This is a report of a review under the Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at the Hansard Society Ltd. The review took place on 13 April 2016 and was conducted by a panel, as follows:

- Ms Brenda Eade
- Professor Diane Meehan.

The main purpose of the review was to:

- make judgements about the provider's delegated responsibilities for the management of quality and improvement of learning opportunities
- draw a conclusion about whether the provider's public information is reliable
- produce a commentary on how effectively the provider discharges its responsibilities for academic standards
- report on any features of good practice
- make recommendations for action.

A summary of the [key findings](#) can be found in the section starting on page 2. The [context](#) in which these findings should be interpreted is explained on page 3. [Explanations](#) of the findings are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 4.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission.¹ More information about this the review method can be found in the [published handbook](#).²

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us

² www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=202

Key findings

The QAA panel considered evidence relating to the educational provision at the Hansard Society Ltd (the Society), both information supplied in advance and evidence gathered during the review visit itself. The review has resulted in the key findings stated in this section.

Judgements

The QAA panel formed the following judgement about the Hansard Society Ltd:

- **confidence can be placed in** the Hansard Society Ltd's management of its responsibilities for the quality of the learning opportunities.

The QAA review panel also concluded that the provider satisfactorily manages its responsibilities for academic standards in accordance with the requirements of its awarding partners.

Conclusion about public information

The QAA panel concluded that:

- **reliance can** be placed on the information that the Hansard Society Ltd produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

Good practice

The QAA panel identified the following **features of good practice** at the Hansard Society Ltd.

- The extensive range of opportunities for scholars and internship providers to give feedback on the learning experience and the effective and timely responses made by the Society (paragraph 2.8).
- The direct relevance to scholars' academic studies and future career aspirations of their highly specialised internships (paragraph 2.12).
- The comprehensive and detailed information provided to scholars during the admissions process and while enrolled on the programme (paragraph 3.3).

Recommendations

The QAA panel makes the following recommendations to the Hansard Society. The panel considers that it is **desirable** for the Hansard Society Ltd to:

- ensure that the marking of all assignments is subject to internal verification (paragraph 1.14)
- ensure that all scholars receive timely feedback on their assessed work (paragraph 2.1).

Context

The Hansard Society, founded in 1944, is an independent, non-partisan political research education charity. The Speaker of the House of Commons and the Lord Speaker of the House of Lords are the co-presidents.

The Society offers the Hansard Society Scholars (HSS) programme, formerly known as the Hansard Scholars Programme. This is an academic internship programme for undergraduate students, through which the participants develop an understanding of representative democracy in preparation for a career in politics or public service. The programme uses the resources available through the Society's relationship with the UK Parliament and devolved legislatures and its work with other bodies. It is organised in association with the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), where scholars are associate students. There are three versions of the programme - a 14 week semester programme which runs in the autumn and spring and an eight week summer programme. Each programme comprises a mix of taught courses, study visits and an internship.

The Society works with 15 US institutions who regularly send students and a further six or so North American and Australian institutions who send students less frequently. These are termed 'feeder institutions' and are selected on the basis of their reputation. All the US institutions are accredited by one of the eight regulatory bodies.

The feeder institutions independently determine the credit awarded to students who have completed the Society's programme. They are responsible for informing students of the value of the credit they will receive and the relationship between the Hansard programme and the main award. On completion of their programme, scholars receive a transcript from the Society with grades awarded for assessment. This is the basis upon which the overseas institutions award credit. The feeder institutions are the key external reference points for the Society in maintaining standards, as their acceptance of credit from the Hansard programme demonstrates that the programme is at a level comparable to their awards.

The Society does not require feeder institutions to enter into formal contracts but in some cases the feeder institutions have requested to have a formal agreement. In the light of the current volatility in recruitment, the Society wishes to increase the number of feeder institutions.

The HSS programme has not been subject to a formal external inspection, but feeder institutions and other overseas providers frequently visit the campus before placing their students on the programme. Comments from feeder institutions following a visit to the Society are generally positive.

Detailed findings about the Hansard Society

1 Academic standards

How effectively does the Hansard Society Ltd fulfil its responsibilities for the management of academic standards?

1.1 Academic Governance Board has responsibility for the academic oversight and management of academic matters relating to the HSS programme. Its remit includes reviewing and approving all academic policies and guidelines; approving new programmes and course curricula; confirming new academic appointments; determining procedures for examination boards; reviewing and approving marking criteria; reviewing and commenting on results of peer review and other evaluative instruments; participating in teaching observations; and establishing and participating on unfair means/plagiarism, complaints, appeals and disciplinary panels. The Board comprises internal members who have a role either within the HSS Programme or the wider Hansard Society, together with external members whose number has recently been increased. The programme team and teaching staff are ex officio members. Issues arising from Academic Governance Board meetings are reported by the Programme Director to the Board of Trustees, which is responsible for the governance of the Society as a whole. Recently, the Society has set up an annual meeting of the Academic Governance Board and the scholars to allow the latter to share their experiences of the programme directly with the Board. The review panel saw evidence that the Academic Governance Board is discharging its responsibilities effectively and in line with its stated remit.

1.2 The roles and responsibilities of key staff in relation to the management of the programme are clearly defined in their role descriptions. The Programme Director has responsibility for the overall and strategic direction of the programme, new programme development and compliance processes, and reports to the Director of the Society through regular one-to-one meetings, to the Board of Trustees via the Scholars' Annual Report, and to the quarterly Academic Governance Board meetings. The Programme Director is supported by the Programme Manager, who has responsibility for the day-to-day management of the programme, assisted by the Outreach and Partnerships Coordinator.

1.3 The Society has a well established and effective mechanism in place for the regular monitoring and review of the programme. The Quality Assessment of Learning Outcomes (QALO) process, which has been benchmarked against *Chapter B8* of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code), uses a range of feedback activities including scholar mid-term and end-of-term programme and course evaluations, internship host mid-term and end-of-term written evaluations, Scholars' Council, a midterm group focus session, Peer Observation and external examiner reports. Outcomes are reported to the Academic Governance Board and to the Board of Trustees and through the Annual Report, and there is evidence of enhancements being made as a result of the process; for example, scholars are now informed of their internship prior to arrival in London and a cross-cultural sensitivity session during orientation has now been introduced.

1.4 The Scholars' Annual Report is written by the Programme Director and is the key, formal mechanism for reporting upwards on the standards and performance of the programme. The report is a comprehensive document which uses a range of performance data; it covers achievements, areas of challenge and priorities for the forthcoming year which, for 2016, include a strategic review of the programme and, in parallel, a programme audit looking at all aspects of the programme's current operation, provision and delivery. Actions arising from the Annual Report are followed up through the Academic Governance Board.

1.5 The Academic Guidelines and their Appendices provide the definitive guide to all academic policies. The documents include the following information: course assignments and assessments; deadlines; dissertations; class conduct and related topics; referencing marking criteria; final grades; plagiarism; and complaints and appeals. The latter has been referenced against *Chapter B9* of the Quality Code. The Academic Guidelines are regularly reviewed and updated. Scholars described the information provided in the Academic Guidelines as being clear and helpful.

1.6 The review panel concludes that the Society effectively fulfils its responsibilities for the management of academic standards.

How effectively are external reference points used in the management of academic standards?

1.7 The Society is making appropriate use of a range of external reference points in the management of academic standards. The individual courses within the programme have been benchmarked against Level 6 of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and relevant Subject Benchmark Statements. The feeder institutions approve the programme as meeting their requirements for the award of credit on the basis of syllabi and the academic requirements of courses, and, in some cases, site visits. The reports of the Society's external examiner provide further assurance that courses are set at the appropriate level.

1.8 Where relevant, the Society has benchmarked its policies and procedures against the Quality Code.

1.9 The programme staff are active members of the Association of American Study Abroad Programmes (AASAP); the Programme Director is currently the Deputy Chair. AASAP is a useful source and reference point for best practice in study abroad programmes.

1.10 The review panel concludes that the Society is making effective use of external reference points in the management of academic standards.

How effectively does the Hansard Society Ltd use external scrutiny of assessment processes to assure academic standards (where applicable)?

1.11 The Society's external examining system is effective. In accordance with its agreement with the LSE, the Society's experienced external examiner is a member of staff of the LSE. The external examiner confirms all assessment instruments, second-marks all dissertations, research essays and examinations, comments on the process and efficiency of the examination system, ensures that internal examiners are correctly applying the marking criteria and confirms marks. He also writes an overall attainment report on each cohort.

1.12 The external examiner reports on a standard template that was developed by the Society following a previous QAA visit and implemented from spring 2015. The Society is now reviewing its use of the template, which it feels constrains the more evaluative comments that were a feature of the previous reports. External examiner reports are considered by the Academic Governance Board. Reports read by the review panel were positive and confirm that standards are being maintained. The review panel learned that the Society is moving to time-limited appointments for its external examiners.

1.13. The Academic Guidelines set out marking criteria for assessments. Assessed work is internally marked by teaching staff, who were clear about what was expected of them in relation to the assessment process. Scholars expressed awareness of the grading criteria. The Academic Guidelines also include the Society's policy on avoidance of plagiarism, which

is adapted from the LSE's policy; scholars confirmed that they are clear about how to avoid plagiarism.

1.14. There is no routine second external or internal marking of essays except in the case of a student query or other issue arising. Until recently, essays generally contributed 25 per cent of the overall mark for a course with the examination contributing 75 per cent; this is now moving to a 40 per cent/60 per cent contribution to the overall mark between the essay and examination. All marks are confirmed by the external examiner before being collated and checked for final sign-off by the Programme Director. The Society provides a transcript for each scholar which is sent to their home institution where marks are converted to credit according to that institution's own conversion policies and procedures; scholars also receive a certificate of completion from the LSE. While the current process ensures that academic standards are not at risk, the internal verification of those assignments not subject to double marking by the external examiner would further strengthen the robustness of the assessment process, particularly as their contribution to the overall course mark increases. The panel considers it **desirable** that the Society should ensure that the marking of all assignments is subject to internal verification.

1.15. The review panel concludes that the Society's use of external scrutiny of its assessment processes to assure academic standards is effective.

The panel has concluded that the Hansard Society Ltd satisfactorily manages its responsibilities for academic standards in accordance with the requirements of its awarding partners.

2 Quality of learning opportunities

How effectively does the Hansard Society Ltd fulfil its responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities?

2.1 The Director of Studies has effective oversight of the programme. This is done through the Academic Governance Board, which is responsible for reviewing policies, approving new programmes and curricula, assessing teaching quality, confirming academic appointments, determining procedures for examination boards and presiding over complaints, appeals and disciplinary panels. The Programme Director is responsible for the overall direction and quality of the programme and reports to the Director of the Society via scheduled fortnightly meetings. The Programme Director is assisted by the Programme Manager and the Outreach and Partnership Coordinator, who monitor the day-to-day operation of the programme and liaise with internship providers. These three full-time members of staff form the Immediate Scholars Team, which meets regularly (usually weekly) to discuss all aspects of the programme, including internships and issues raised by scholars. Minutes of these meetings indicate that action points are recorded and followed up at the subsequent meeting. The three part-time members of staff who deliver the taught modules are invited to attend at least two academic de-brief meetings per autumn and spring term.

2.2 The Programme Director's Annual Report is the formal mechanism for reporting to the Society on the achievements, strengths and weaknesses of the programme, as well as indicating the priorities for the forthcoming year. The Report is approved by the Academic Governance Board before being considered by the Board of Trustees. Issues arising from the delivery of each of the three programmes are discussed at the quarterly meetings of the Academic Governance Board and action required is recorded and acted upon.

2.3 The panel concludes that the Society has effective processes in place to manage the quality of learning opportunities.

How effectively are external reference points used in monitoring and evaluation processes?

2.4 The Society uses a range of external reference points to monitor and evaluate the programme effectively. The feeder institutions confirm the quality of the learning opportunities through the award of credit on completion of the courses and by continuing to send students to participate in the programmes. The Programme Director is Deputy Chair of the Association of American Study Abroad Programmes (AASAP) UK, and the Society uses the resources and policies of this organisation to identify best practice in areas such as pastoral support and diversity and equality.

2.5 The Academic Governance Board, which is responsible for oversight of the programme, has external members in the form of academics representing other organisations and practitioners such as Senior Clerks of the House of Commons, as well as members of the Society. Observation of teaching is undertaken by an academic from another university, providing external monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. Written feedback is given to the lecturers and the programme team. Host organisations give feedback on the internship through mid and end-of-term evaluations, providing external monitoring of this part of the programme. The assessment process is overseen by an external examiner, a senior member of staff of the LSE. The external examiner also signs off changes to the curriculum which have been approved by Academic Board. All of the undergraduate programmes have been mapped against the FHEQ at Level 6 and against the latest Subject Benchmark Statement for Politics and International Relations (February 2015). The Quality Code has been used effectively as an external reference point for the Academic Guidelines, which include plagiarism and appeals and complaints policies.

How effectively does the Hansard Society Ltd assure itself that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?

2.6 Through its QALO process, the Society effectively monitors the quality of teaching and learning and uses the feedback it obtains from scholars, placement providers, feeder institutions and members of the programme team to enhance learning opportunities.

2.7 A variety of methods for gathering feedback and data for the evaluation process are used, including midterm evaluations; end-of-term programme and course evaluations; internship host midterm and end-of-term written evaluations; meetings of the Scholars' Council; focus sessions with scholars; the outcomes of teaching observations; and the reports of the external examiner. Scholars confirmed that they have been given multiple opportunities to contribute to the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, and that the Society has been responsive to issues they have raised.

2.8 The process of feedback and evaluation has led to a number of enhancements to the quality of teaching and learning, including the introduction of a cross-cultural sensitivity session; a review of the balance between parts 1 and 2 of the summer course; a visit to the National Assembly of Wales; and the introduction of a social media page to provide more information about the programme. Scholars commented that, as a result of the evaluation and monitoring process, lecturers have made changes to the contents of slide presentations and provided more opportunities for scholars to engage in discussion during the lecture. The extensive range of opportunities for scholars and internship providers to give feedback on the learning experience, and the effective and timely responses made by the Society, are **good practice**.

2.9 Students confirmed that the programme complements their home studies, broadens their perspectives and teaches them new skills, such as writing policy briefs. They find it challenging and academically rigorous. The learning opportunities provided by the placement, guest speakers and study visits support the development of their academic, personal and professional potential.

How effectively does the Hansard Society Ltd assure itself that students are appropriately supported?

2.10 The Society effectively supports scholars during the admissions process and while they are on their programme of study. Scholars confirmed that, although their Study Abroad Advisors had provided the initial information about the programme, the Society had provided support and guidance during the application process. Feedback on the admissions process is gathered via the Scholars' Council and midterm evaluations.

2.11 The Society provides an extensive orientation programme, which includes input from Parliament's outreach service. This introduces scholars to the terminology and parliamentary processes with which they need to be familiar for their internships. Scholars indicated that the orientation programme had built rapport within the cohort and had provided an effective introduction to the content and structure of their programme. They had been able to talk to experts on parliamentary procedures and had found the session on academic expectations helpful.

2.12 The Society uses the resources available through its cooperation with the UK Parliament, Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly to provide a comprehensive range of opportunities. It provides a variety of guest lectures directly linked to the political arena and arranges study visits. Internships, which are central to the participatory nature of the programme, are individually determined on the needs of the hosts and the skill sets of the scholars. Scholars receive information about their placement prior to joining the programme, and are provided with an internship pack which introduces them to the host organisation and an internship handbook which outlines the expectations of the placement. Scholars indicated that the internship had contributed effectively to their home study programme and had enabled them to gain a broad exposure to the work of Parliament. The direct relevance to scholars' academic studies and future career aspirations of their highly specialised internships is **good practice**.

2.13 Tutors provide further support outside the classroom by offering an office hour after each teaching session. Scholars are also able to contact them via email. Scholars receive feedback on their assessed work, but indicated that this is not always detailed and timely. The Society recognises that more guidance on the provision of feedback is required. The panel considers that it is **desirable** for the Hansard Society to ensure that all scholars receive timely feedback on their assessed work.

How effective are the Hansard Society Ltd's arrangements for staff development in relation to maintaining and/or enhancing the quality of learning opportunities?

2.14 The Society has a staff appraisal policy which enables staff to identify training needs and uses the AASAP as a resource for the identification of best practice in study abroad programmes. A member of teaching staff indicated that he had not participated in staff development events, but had undergone rigorous questioning at interview to confirm that he had the necessary subject knowledge and skills to deliver the courses. The Society recognises that it needs to invest in more specific staff training, particularly in areas such as pastoral support and diversity.

How effectively does the Hansard Society Ltd ensure that students have access to learning resources that are sufficient to enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes of their programmes?

2.15 The Society provides scholars with access to a range of resources, which enables them to achieve the intended learning outcomes. It has a strong link to LSE and uses its accommodation for teaching purposes. Scholars have access to the learning resources at LSE, including the extensive library and electronic databases. Tutors use the Society's virtual learning environment (VLE) to provide additional resources relating to each of the taught courses and to direct scholars to other sources of information.

2.16 Scholars confirmed that they use the LSE library as well as the British Library, where they have lending rights and are able to access relevant texts and other learning resources. They are given opportunities to provide feedback on the provision of learning resources through the QALO process.

2.17 The Panel concludes that the resources available are sufficient to support students to achieve the intended learning outcomes of their programmes.

The panel has **confidence** that the Hansard Society Ltd is fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of the learning opportunities it provides for students.

3 Public information

How effective are the Hansard Society Ltd's arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information it has responsibility for publishing?

3.1 There are appropriate processes in place for assuring that information is accurate and complete. Responsibility for the oversight of information provided about the Hansard Society Scholars Programme rests with the Programme Director. In February 2016, the Society launched a dedicated HSS Programme website having previously relied on the main Hansard Society website for its public platform. The Society's Communications and Digital Manager has overall responsibility for the website while the Programme Team ensures that the information published on the website remains up to date. Staff also periodically check the websites of the regular feeder institutions to ensure the accuracy of any references made to the LSE and, where necessary, ask that corrections are made.

3.2 The Society provides applicants and scholars with a comprehensive range of detailed information in relation to the admissions process, pre-departure information and the Programme. Admission procedures, supported by the feeder institutions, are clear and rigorous. Scholars receive digital copies of the Academic Guidelines, programme handbooks and other essential information in their pre-departure pack. They also receive a hard copy, provided in their welcome pack on arrival in London, together with other helpful orientation materials. Scholars also receive an internship pack, which introduces them to the host organisation and an internship handbook, which outlines the expectations of the placement.

3.3 The VLE, provided for the scholars' use throughout the programme, includes course descriptions, course outlines, the Academic Guidelines, course orientation slides, lecture slides, policy drafts and a news forum for updates from the lecturers. Scholars commented positively on the detailed and accurate information they received to support the application process and their studies, both prior to joining the programme and on arrival in London. The comprehensive and detailed information provided to scholars during the admissions process and while enrolled on the programme is **good practice**.

3.4 The panel concluded that the Society has effective arrangements in place for assuring the accuracy and completeness of the information it has responsibility for publishing.

The panel concludes that **reliance can be placed** on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the Hansard Society Ltd is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

4 Action plan³

Hansard Society Ltd action plan relating to the Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight in April 2016						
Good practice	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date(s)	Action by ⁴	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence) ⁵
The review panel identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the Hansard Society Ltd:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extensive range of opportunities for scholars and internship providers to give feedback on the learning experience and the effective and timely responses made by the Society (paragraph 2.8) 	To elicit more individualised and more internship-specific feedback from scholars and internship providers and to act on this information in better preparing all parties for the internship experience.	To institute individual site visits to each scholar and their internship provider in situ for a one-to-two (staff member to scholar and host) discussion of the internship experience followed by a one-to-one (staff member and scholar) discussion of the internship and other components of the programme.	From summer 2016 onwards.	Programme Manager and Outreach and Partnerships Coordinator.	Programme Director and upwards to Academic Governance Board and Board of Trustees.	To analyse the feedback from the site visits; to monitor consequential improvements in the internship experience; to track retention rates of internship hosts to ascertain whether rates increase.

³ Hansard Society Ltd has been required to develop this action plan to follow up on good practice and address any recommendations arising from the review. QAA monitors progress against the action plan.

⁴ State a role, not a named individual.

⁵ Indicate how the actions will be evaluated once completed.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the direct relevance to scholars' academic studies and future career aspirations of their highly specialised internships (paragraph 2.12) 	<p>To determine the degree to which the scholar's internship experience is directly related to 1) their academic studies and 2) their career aspirations and to address identifiable gaps.</p>	<p>Firstly, to revise questions in the scholars' end-of-programme evaluation form to extend the analysis of relevance and to conduct a 'one year on' survey to try to determine whether the sense/degree of relevance has changed; and secondly, to include questions about relevance in the alumni survey being conducted as part of the alumni development initiative.</p>	<p>Programme evaluation changes instituted from summer 2016; 'one year on' survey from summer 2017; alumni survey in autumn 2016.</p>	<p>Outreach and Partnerships Co-ordinator.</p>	<p>Programme Manager and Programme Director and upwards to Academic Governance Board.</p>	<p>To analyse and compare data obtained in end-of-programme evaluations, 'one year on' and alumni surveys to see whether meaningful data can be collected, interpreted and translated into course and programme enhancements.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the comprehensive and detailed information provided to scholars during the admissions process and while enrolled on the programme (paragraph 3.3). 	<p>To ensure that virtually all information about the programme is as accurate, up to date, informative, user friendly and comprehensive as it should be in each case.</p>	<p>To continue to build the new website, adding more information and more links; to review and update every document at the beginning of each programme cycle, normally by two members of staff; to continue to monitor the course lecturers' VLE uploads and scholar use of them; to continue to seek feedback from scholars, internship hosts and feeder institutions about what more or differently formatted information would better serve them.</p>	<p>From summer 2016 onwards.</p>	<p>Programme Manager, Outreach and Partnerships Coordinator, Programme Director and Communications and Digital Manager.</p>	<p>Scholars, internship hosts, feeder institution faculty and staff.</p>	<p>From user feedback; website traffic analytics.</p>

Desirable	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date/s	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The panel considers that it would be desirable for the provider to:						
ensure that all the marking of all assignments is subject to internal verification (paragraph 1.14)	To strengthen the robustness, fairness and transparency of the marking system.	To appoint a PhD student from the University of London system to second-mark the essays and policy briefs internally and to weight the marks accordingly.	From autumn 2016 onwards.	Programme Director and course lecturers.	Programme Manager, course lecturers, external examiner, and ultimately the Academic Governance Board.	To analyse the differences between course lecturers' and PhD student examiner's marks and to compare differences to those between the course lecturers' and external examiner's marks on dissertations and research essays.
ensure that all scholars receive timely feedback on their assessed work (paragraph 2.13).	To make sure that scholars receive feedback early enough in the assignment cycle to inform their work on their next assignment and in the case of one course, to require	To move up and rigorously enforce the mark and feedback submission deadlines for the course lecturers, PhD student examiner (above) and the external examiner and to check each piece to ensure that it is sufficiently detailed and informative.	Stricter deadline imposition from spring 2016 onwards; PhD student examiner input from autumn 2016 onwards.	Programme Manager.	Programme Director and Academic Governance Board.	Receipt of marks and feedback by deadlines and scholar feedback on the process.

	more detailed feedback.					
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Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary. More details and formal definitions of key terms can be found in the [handbook](#)⁶ for this review method.

Academic quality A comprehensive term referring to how, and how well, higher education providers manage teaching and learning opportunities to help students progress and succeed.

Academic standards The standards set and maintained by degree-awarding bodies for their courses (programmes and modules) and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

Credit(s) A means of quantifying and recognising learning, used by most institutions that provide higher education programmes of study, expressed as 'numbers of credits' at a specific level.

Enhancement The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. It is used as a technical term in QAA's review processes.

Good practice A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's review processes.

Learning opportunities The provision made for students' learning, including planned study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, and resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios).

Learning outcome What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

Programme (of study) An approved course of study which provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

Public information Information that is freely available to the public (sometimes referred to as being 'in the public domain').

Widening participation Increasing the involvement in higher education of people from a wider range of backgrounds.

QAA1649 - R4998 - July 16

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⁶ www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=202